

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 18080

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJECT: UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS DROP PLANS FOR DECEMBER EXHIBIT

REF: MOSCOW 17654

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO A LEADING UNOFFICIAL ARTIST, NEGOTIATIONS WITH MOSCOW CULTURAL OFFICIALS OVER THE NEXT UNOFFICIAL ART EXHIBIT HAVE BEEN DROPPED BY THE ARTISTS DUE TO INCREASING POLICE HARASSMENT. ARTISTS MAY HAVE ANOTHER GO AT IT NEXT YEAR, BUT FOR THE TIME BEING THEY WANT ONLY PEACE AND QUIET. END SUMMARY.

2. ARTIST OSKAR RABIN, ONE OF CHIEF ORGANIZERS OF SEPTEMBER 29 IZMAILOVO PARK UNOFFICIAL ART EXHIBIT, TOLD EMBOFF NOVEMBER 30 THAT ARTISTS GROUP HAD RECENTLY DECIDED TO DROP NEGOTIATIONS WITH MOSCOW CITY CULTURAL ADMINISTRATION FOR NEXT EXHIBIT, ORIGINALLY PLANNED FOR DECEMBER. RABIN GAVE RASON AS INCREASING POLICE AND KGB HARASSMENT OF ARTISTS WHO EXHIBITED ON SEPTEMBER 29 AND CONSEQUENT INABILITY OF ARTISTS TO CONCENTRATE ON THEIR WORK.

3. ACCORDING TO RABIN, ARTISTS HAVE BEEN ASSURED ON NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, MOST RECENTLY IN LATE  
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NOVEMBER, BY MOSCOW CULTURAL ADMINISTRATION CHIEF, B. POKARZHEVSKIY, THAT THEIR REQUEST FOR A

DECEMBER EXHIBIT WOULD BE HONORED AND THAT ARTISTS COULD HAVE A FREE HAND IN ORGANIZING IT IN ANY WAY THEY SAW FIT. DESPITE THESE ASSURANCES, MANY ARTISTS (RABIN SAID ABOUT FORTY) HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO HARASSMENT OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER. MANY HAVE BEEN STOPPED BY MILITIA AND QUESTIONED ABOUT "INCONSISTENCIES" IN THEIR INTERNAL DOCUMENTS. OTHERS HAVE HAD THEIR APARTMENTS SEARCHED BY KGB PLAINCLOTHESMEN AND CALLED INTO MILITIA STATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH UNSPECIFIED "CASES" UNDER INVESTIGATION. SOME HAVE ALSO BEEN ROUGHED UP BY "HOOLIGANS." SEVERAL ARTISTS HAVE RECENTLY RECEIVED ORDERS FROM LOCAL DRAFT BOARDS FOR PRE-INDUCTION PHYSICALS. ONE ARTIST, WHO IS AN ARMY RESERVIST, WAS SENT OFF TO ALTAYSKIY KRAY ON THE PRETEXT THAT AN ARTIST WAS URGENTLY NEEDED BY A LOCAL ARMY UNIT. SEVERAL WERE ALSO TEMPORARILY COMMITTED TO MENTAL INSTITUTIONS FOR EXAMINATION AFTER THEIR ARMY PHYSICALS.

4. RABIN SAID ARTISTS GROUP HAD SENT LETTERS TO KGB CHIEF ANDROPOV AND TO MVD MINISTER SHCHELOKOV IN WHICH THEY LISTED INCIDENTS OF HARASSMENT AND ASKED THAT THEY CEASE. ANDROPOV NEVER REPLIED, WHILE SHCHELOKOV INFORMED THEM THAT THEIR LETTER WOULD BE CONSIDERED BY MOSCOW INTERNAL AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION. RABIN SHOWED EMBOFF OFFICIAL REPLY OF NOVEMBER 26 FROM MOSCOW MILITIA OFFICIAL "KIRPICHEV" (TRANSLATED AS "BRICK") WHICH STATED THAT THE ARTISTS COMPLAINTS HAD BEEN EXAMINED BUT THAT ALL MILITIA ACTIONS WERE CONSIDERED TO BE "FULLY CORRECT." WHEN ARTISTS COMPLAINED TO POKARZHEVSKIY, HE TOLD THEM HE HANDLED CULTURAL AFFAIRS, NOT POLICE MATTERS.

5. RABIN SAID ARTISTS HAD A RECENT GENERAL MEETING AT WHICH IT BECAME CLEAR THAT MANY WERE FRIGHTENED AND TIRED OF BEING HARASSED. AFTER MUCH DEBATE, IT WAS DECIDED TO DROP IDEA OF DECEMBER EXHIBIT. ARTISTS ALSO DECIED NOT TO SEEK PUBLICITY, AND REJECTED SUGGESTION BY SOME THAT A STATEMENT TO THE WESTERN PRESS  
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BE DRAFTED GIVING THEIR REASONS, AND CONDEMNING POLICE-KGB TACTICS. RABIN OPINED THAT, AFTER A COOLING-OFF PERIOD, ATTEMPTS TO STAGE ANOTHER EXHIBIT MIGHT BE REJUVENATED.

6. RABIN ALSO MADE LIGHT OF RECENT OFFICIAL EXHIBIT (REFTEL) AT WHICH WORKS OF SEVERAL NON-CONFORMIST ARTISTS (INCLUDING RABIN) WERE SHOWN. HE FELT THE EXHIBIT WAS AN ATTEMPT BY AUTHORITIES TO SPLIT UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS GROUP, AND WAS PROBABLY AIMED AT PRODUCING GOOD IMAGE IN WESTERN PRESS. THIS APPARENTLY

CONTRADICTORY BEHAVIOR OF SECURITY ORGANS WAS  
ASCRIBED BY RABIN TO "THE SYSTEM."

7. COMMENT: WE HAVE NOTED IN PREVIOUS REPORTING THAT  
THE AUTHORITIES HAVE A CONSIDERABLE ARRAY OF WEAPONRY  
TO EMPLOY AGAINST THE NON-CONFORMIST ARTISTS GROUP.  
THE SCARE CAMPAIGN SEEMS TO HAVE WORKED FOR THE PRESENT,  
AND THE LATEST SKIRMISH HAS RESULTED IN A CLEAR  
VICTORY FOR THE AUTHORITIES, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE  
ARTISTS HAVE APPARENTLY DECIDED NOT TO SEEK OUT THE  
WESTERN PRESS AS VIGOROUSLY AS THEY HAVE IN THE PAST.  
WE DO NOT THINK THE LAST SHOTS HAVE BEEN FIRED, HOWEVER,  
AND EXPECT THAT THE BATTLE WILL CONTINUE WHEN THE  
ARTISTS GET UP THEIR NERVE AGAIN.  
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